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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/822,443	04/12/2004	Jeffrey Duncan Watters	67602.000003	1433

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HUNTON & WILLIAMS LLP  
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DEPARTMENT  
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WASHINGTON, DC 20006-1109

EXAMINER
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GOODEN JR, BARRY J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3616

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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11/07/2007

PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 10/822,443	<b>Applicant(s)</b> WATTERS, JEFFREY DUNCAN	
	<b>Examiner</b> Barry J. Gooden Jr.	<b>Art Unit</b> 3616	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 August 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 11-21 and 34-38 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 11-21 and 34-38 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)                                | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                       | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application                       |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

**DETAILED ACTION**

This office action is in response to the amendment filed August 28, 2007. Currently, claims 11-21 and 34-38 are pending. Claims 34-38 are new. Claims 11 and 14-17 are amended.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

1. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

2. Claim 37 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. In the instant case the specification does not provide support for "at least one of a coil spring and an air spring". Examiner suggests replacing with -- one of a coil spring or an air spring -- changes should be reflected on lines 2 and 5 of the claim.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 11-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Nissan Serena in view of Anderson et al., US Patent 4,847,972.

In regards to claims 11-18, the Nissan Serena is disclosed as a vehicle comprising an independent rear suspension (multi-link), mountings thereof, and a rear hatch door capable of accommodating a wheelchair in a width direction.

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In regards to Anderson et al., an apparatus is disclosed wherein a portion of the floorpan of a vehicle is lowered to facilitate ingress and egress of a handicapped person wherein the floorpan extends forwardly from a rearward entrance of the vehicle to a driver position;

wherein the lowered portion of the floorpan is sufficiently wide to accommodate a handicapped person; and,

wherein the floorpan is substantially flat (Reference is made to Figures 5-15).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the Nissan Serena in view of the teachings of Anderson et al. to include a lowered floorpan extending from a rearward entrance to a driver portion of the vehicle so as to facilitate ingress and egress of a handicapped occupant in a vehicle other than that disclosed in Anderson et al., since it is old and well known to provide means of occupant ingress and egress for handicapped persons in various vehicles.

Furthermore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the location at which a handicapped person may enter the vehicle, thus modifying the layout of the floorpan and location of the lowered portions, since it has been held that rearranging parts of an invention involves only routine skill in the art.

Also, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide a floorpan of various widths, including 850mm (less than a third of the Serena's width), since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art.

5. Claims 18-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Nissan Serena in view of Anderson et al., US Patent 4,847,972, and further in view of Hall, US Patent 4,688,843.

In regards to Hall, a wheelchair restraint system including a restraining belt (37) being anchored to the vehicle floor (12) by means of a belt mounting frame (37A) (Reference is made to Figures 1-5).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the floorpan of the Nissan Serena in view of the teachings of Anderson et al., as disclosed above, in view of the teachings of Hall to include a wheelchair restraint system so as to enable a handicapped person to operate the vehicle without worry of moving within the vehicle.

6. Claims 34-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Nissan Serena in view of Anderson et al., US Patent 4,847,972, and further in view of Alatalo, US Patent 5,641,176.

In regards to claims 34-38, the combination as disclosed above the claimed elements excluding a rear trailing arm suspension.

Alatalo discloses all of the claimed elements including a trailing arm (10), a front mount (40), a spring mount (34), a wheel mount (18), and a shock mount (22). Alatalo discloses bushings rather than bearings; however it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include a bearing since it is a simple substitution of one known element for another to obtain predictable results.

Furthermore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the suspension of the Nissan Serena in view of Anderson et al. in view of the teachings of Alatalo to include a rear trailing arm suspension since it is a simple substitution of one known element for another to obtain predictable results.

### ***Response to Arguments***

7. Applicant's arguments filed August 13, 2007 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Examiner maintains the previous rejection is proper.

In a response to election/restriction filed August 28, 2006, the applicant elected claims 11-21, which were drawn to a front wheel drive vehicle. In doing so the applicant elected product-by-process claims (Reference is made to MPEP 2113), the determination of patentability of product-by-process claims is based on the product itself and does not depend on its method of production. As such, the

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additional components (for example "original rear suspension") do not serve to define over the prior art, as they are not germane to the patentability of the product itself.

***Conclusion***

8. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

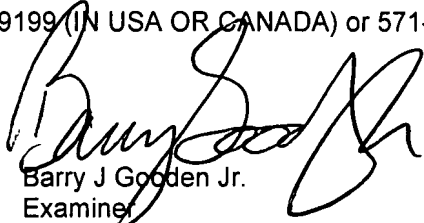
A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Barry J. Gooden Jr. whose telephone number is (571) 272-5135. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 8:00am-4:30pm.


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul N. Dickson can be reached on (571) 272-6669. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

 10/29/07  
Barry J Gooden Jr.  
Examiner  
Art Unit 3616

BJG

 10/29/07  
PAUL N. DICKSON  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600